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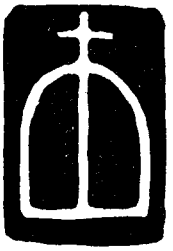

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

The Church And Mr. Kennedy

THE SUBJECT of the President and Catholicism was, we had assumed, a thoroughly dead one, well-buried by the election results. Now, after reading far too many evaluations of the President's conduct as a Catholic during his first year in office, we can only observe that some people never tire of talking of some things. Nor do they seem able to avoid confusing and confounding the issues while they are at it. The result of the talk this time has been to do the President a grave injustice.

Mr. Kennedy has been treated unjustly by two groups. First, he has been badly served by those who have heaped extravagant praise on him for his stand on federal aid to parochial schools. Not content with simply approving his position, they have made him out to be an epic figure in preserving the First Amendment. In the eyes of the *Christian Century*, "John F. Kennedy has compiled a better record on the issue of separation of church and state than any other President we have had in the past thirty years." The reason for such praise, not surprisingly, is that he "refused to bow to the will of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. . . ."

Secondly, he has been no less badly served by those Catholics who condemned his aid-to-education bill for its exclusion of aid to parochial schools. For that group, the President's bill would have countenanced "a positive act of discrimination" against Catholics. To make matters worse, these critics impute bad motives to the President: as they see it, he took his stand only to ward off non-Catholic attack and opposition.

There is little that needs to be said about the Protestant praise. The President seems to us to have acted in quite an ordinary fashion: he is neither a hero nor a villain in the perennial church-state discussion. Peopled as that historic discussion is with mythical figures and forces, the President seems a minor character. And it is simply nonsense to think of the President as one courageously defying the will of the hierarchy. The hierarchy, to be sure, took a stand—a rather blunt and tactless one, politically—but they did not attempt to impose their will on the President as a Catholic. Nor did they, as the *Christian Century* implies, require any Catholic "in obedience" to accept their stand. It is misleading to state the matter so, or even to suggest it.

THE CATHOLIC criticism is another question. As we have often said, we believe that the President's reading of the Constitution is a dubiously narrow one. We believe that a good Constitutional case can be made out for certain kinds of aid to private education. We can hardly believe that every type of aid, however limited, would subvert the First Amendment. Still more, the argument that a denial of such aid amounts to an injustice is a plausible and reasonable one. We would agree fully with those who said that the President's Constitutional stand was not a strong or a wise one.

But it is one thing to hold that position and quite another to draw the conclusion that the President's stand is, on the face of it, knowingly and culpably discriminatory. What is forgotten is that Mr. Kennedy's reading of the Constitution is a common and widespread one and has been for decades. It is, for many constitutional lawyers, an unexceptional reading. That many other eminent constitutional lawyers consider the reading narrow, erroneous and unnecessary does not change that fact.

One can, to be sure, criticize the President for choosing the safe, conservative reading when better ones are available. But it is a purely gratuitous insult to all but accuse him of dissimulation and discrimination because of his choice. Given the divided legal opinion on the question, no man can be accused of wilful discrimination solely because he accepts one reading rather than another. To read only the crassest political expediency into his choice is to compound the injustice. We regret that some

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Catholics have expressed themselves in that offensive way.

Let us assume, however, for the sake of argument, that the President took public opinion into account before reaching his decision. Is it so obvious that all Catholics disagree with his interpretation of the First Amendment? Is it really the case that all Catholics feel themselves victimized, more sinned against than sinning? Are Catholics unanimous in their opposition to any bill which would not include aid to parochial schools? We think not. On the contrary, Catholics hold many positions on federal aid to education.

Indeed, the most disturbing thing about much Catholic writing on the subject is that it continually talks about "the Catholic position." Despite the aggrieved, often hysterical prose of much of the Catholic press, many Catholics do not have the least sense of being victimized. Many in fact approve of the President's position and hold that the needs of the public schools take precedence over those of parochial schools. Even if, as may be the case, a majority reject the President's stand, there are still a considerable number of Catholics—including some bishops—who are against federal aid for any schools. Once again, we observe ruefully, the expression "the Catholic position" is being misused—a persuasive, question-begging phrase masquerading as a factual one.

What does all this come to? It comes at least to a simple requirement in charity that we cease reading unworthy motives into the President's positions. Criticism, yes; mind-reading and soul-searching, no. Let us by all means continue attempting to persuade Mr. Kennedy and others of the constitutional case for aid to parochial schools. If he is not persuaded, well, he's not and that's all. The President has given neither Protestants nor Catholics grounds for special praise or blame. We commend him for it.

New Guinea's Fate

THE LEGITIMACY of Indonesia's impassioned claim to West New Guinea has long been disputed by the Dutch and questioned by others. Indonesian is spoken only along the coastal areas. The Papuans, who comprise the bulk of the population, are of a different ethnic stock; the great majority live in inaccessible mountains and valleys in the interior, most of them at a Stone Age, headhunting stage of civilization. Few have even heard of Indonesian nationalism, while the more educated in the lowlands, now encouraged by the anti-Indonesian Dutch, are developing a Papuan nationalism of their own.

President Sukarno claims that all the former Dutch East Indies belong to Indonesia by virtue of the November 1949 treaty which ended overt hostilities. If the inhabitants of West New Guinea themselves manifest little desire to be "liberated" by Jakarta, Dr. Sukarno's ardent followers vehemently favor taking over the disputed area. Recent Dutch success in awakening Papuan interest in self-determination is now spurring Indonesia (with Soviet encouragement) to step up the pressure for such a takeover in anti-colonialism's name.

What would be the upshot if the issue were left to outright force? Holland itself is on the other side of the globe. It has only a few ships and planes and several thousand men in West New Guinea. Modest reinforcements are on the way, for Dutch troops in transit are reported to be protesting their civilian dress, which would deprive them of the protection of the Geneva Convention. Despite the eagerness of Indonesians to volunteer for New Guinea service, Jakarta would also find this a most difficult terrain. Its *matériel* is clearly inadequate for mounting an attack two thousand miles from its chief military bases. The sinking of a torpedo boat by Dutch fire, January 15, supplied some sobering evidence of the resistance to be expected.

But it does not look as if it will come to armed combat. In the present anti-colonial atmosphere Indonesia's repeated threats should be enough. The Dutch have little to gain from hanging onto this primitive wilderness; that they will withdraw appears inevitable. Australia, which is seeking gradually to develop and civilize its eastern half of the primitive island, now expects it.

Secretary U Thant has been doing his utmost to bring about Netherlands-Indonesia negotiations. He has at last succeeded. What basis is there for an agreement? It will be nice if a formula can be found which will satisfy Indonesian nationalist fervor and mollify Dutch national pride. That objective will be in the foreground, but it is hardly the primary concern. What of the West New Guineans themselves?

In view of Indonesia's severe internal economic and political difficulties, there is small likelihood of the natives' being greatly benefited by a settlement involving years of Jakarta rule as a preliminary to some future moment of self-determination. Nor under present conditions can the Dutch long remain in the picture. Perhaps the best to be hoped for under the circumstances is some sort of mandate over West New Guinea for Indonesia—a mandate which would hold that Republic strictly and periodically accountable to the United Nations and expressly provide for a U.N.-supervised plebiscite far enough in the future to make it meaningful.

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Twisting the Elephant's Tail

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S performance at his recent press conference was impressive and gratifying on many counts. His handling of the defeat by the House Rules Committee of his bill to create a Cabinet Department of Urban Affairs and Housing was, we think, especially noteworthy.

On the level of sheer craft, anyone interested in the art and practice of politics would have to admit that the President acquitted himself like a master. Although the bill in question was killed in committee by the votes of four Southern Democrats and all five Republicans (final tally: 9-6), Mr. Kennedy did not even mention the defection of the Southern Democrats. Nor did he refer to the fact that his party enjoys a two-to-one majority on the committee.

Instead, the President confessed to being "astonished" that the Republicans on the committee voted unanimously against the urban affairs bill. "I'd got the impression two weeks ago," he said, "after reading the reports of the meeting in Oklahoma, that [Republicans] shared our concern for more effective management and responsibility of the problems of the two-thirds of our population who live in the cities." Later, in response to a reporter's question, he said that he had already decided to name Robert C. Weaver, head of the Housing and Home Finance Agency, to the new post.

What the President had done was to switch the onus for the defeat of the urban affairs bill to the opposition party. More, he had attacked Republicans precisely where they are by their own admission most vulnerable: their weakness in urban centers and their lack of appeal to American Negroes. But this stratagem was important for reasons other than the pleasure it afforded Democratic partisans.

Mr. Kennedy has now put public pressure on all the Republicans in Congress to stand up and be counted on the urban affairs post, which has already been resubmitted as a reorganization measure that will go into effect automatically unless it is voted down by either house. Announcing that the new Cabinet office will go to Robert Weaver, who would be the first Negro to hold such a rank, puts Republican Congressmen even more on the spot. Still more significant, perhaps, is the fact that this announcement amounts to an open challenge to the Southerners in his party and seems to make inevitable what Mr. Kennedy has previously tried hard to avoid—that is, intra-party war on the floor of Congress.

This development, along with the Administration's support of a Senate bill to curb the literacy tests used in the South to prevent Negroes from voting, seems to indicate that the President will not follow the path of compromise and conciliation in achieving his legislative goals. As critics who have often urged Mr. Kennedy to adopt exactly the course he appears now to have embarked on, we support him in his decision.

It is true that the President is obviously in the process of creating issues which may be expected to help his party at the polls this year, but he is also, we think, doing something else. Whether it is his primary intent or not, he is educating the American voter, applying proper pressure on the Congressman who represents that voter and, in the only way possible this year, working to bring about the legislation he has promised that voter.

O.A.S. Conference

THE PUNTA DEL ESTE conference at this writing has not been concluded, but it looks as though the results of that meeting will be rather better than we had any right to expect. It is true that the United States delegation to the Americas' Foreign Ministers conference has had to back down somewhat in its attempt to force strong anti-Castro action by the Organization of American States, but the resolutions now being hammered out represent pretty much the U.S. viewpoint after all. More important than this, however, is the fact that the U.S. did not fall back on threats and economic blackmail to persuade the other members.

At the start of the conference, it seemed entirely possible that Punta del Este would turn out to be the scene of another, not untypical, foreign policy blunder. That is to say, the strategy revealed by Secretary Rusk seemed to be that of an era we would be happy to see ended: the strategy of the hard ultimatum to unconvinced allies. The U.S. insistence on anti-Castro proclamations by the O.A.S., even formal expulsion of Cuba from the organization and the imposition of economic sanctions, was painfully reminiscent of occasions in the past when our State Department has gone all-out for the sake of some paper triumph.

It had appeared that the belligerent stand of the U.S. at Punta del Este could have only two possible outcomes: the ultimatum might have succeeded, at the cost of deep resentment among the other American states, and all for the sake of a not very meaningful paper declaration; or the ultimatum might have failed, leaving the U.S. in the ignominious position of the bully whose bluff has been called. Happily, neither of these developments has come to pass. The U.S. delegation, after an ominous start, exhibited a reassuring ability to adapt to difficult situations; it showed unexpected flexibility and re-

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straint in the pursuit of its aims, even in the face of bitter opposition.

The resolutions which were finally drafted—declaring Cuba a Marxist-Leninist state incompatible with the inter-American system and excluding Cuba from participation in O.A.S. activities—do not go as far as Secretary Rusk wanted, and in themselves hardly do anything to solve our hemispheric problems. But the meetings which produced these resolutions seem to have had a number of good results. They showed, and probably helped to bring about, a growth in understanding and solidarity among the American states; the U.S. position is now better appreciated; other American states have moved closer to a realization of the dangers of Castroism. Most of all, the resolutions seem to express the real feelings of these states, rather than being just empty words.

All in all, the conference at Punta del Este does not add up to a great diplomatic victory for the U.S., but as a result of this meeting the total Latin American situation seems now at least somewhat improved. And in the light of the enormous possibilities for disaster at this conference, even this is something to be thankful for.

For Ivan Mestrovic, 1883-1962

AT THE University of Syracuse, where he was to stay for eight and a half years, the sculptor Ivan Mestrovic was revered by the entire official University family and most of the student body, if for no other reason, as a useful addition to that institution's public relations campaign. With self-conscious awe, we delighted in the harsh, foreign sound of his name and in his exotic, quite conspiratorial appearance. If Cornell had Nabokov we had Mestrovic, the saying went, for the achievement mattered little compared to the reputation. If anybody on campus had ever stopped to consider the ponderous forms in stone or wood or metal which his imagination shaped, the act would have seemed superfluous to the automatic reputation which the sculptor already seemed to enjoy. Realizing this, I suppose, Mestrovic played his role as a "celebrity" convincingly but reluctantly; it no longer held any novelty for him, and he was getting old and still had much work to do.

After exiling himself from Yugoslavia, he had come to Syracuse out of necessity. The myth was that an alert alumnus had found him *in extremis* at a U.S. consulate abroad and had arranged for Syracuse to take him on, sight unseen. That was before his one-man show at the Metropolitan Museum took place, and when the campus daily found out who was in their midst, Mestrovic immediately gained the stature of a major institutional totem, comparable to the Negro captain of the football team or the President of the school, whose major accomplishment to date had been erection of numerous brick and glass box-shaped buildings. In one of these strange buildings—the Joe and Emily Lowe Art Center after its donors, who made their fortune in "popsicles"—samples of Mestrovic's work could be occasionally seen, even though the artist preferred to have his studios in a ramshackle, high-ceilinged barn at the other end of campus.

I remember very clearly that place where Mestrovic worked. It seemed the final ignominy and exile for the great man. No doubt, in making the old barn available to Mestrovic, the University officials must have congratulated themselves on having catered to the East European's whim to be left alone. Later, when they realized that they had been dealing with a man who had lived in palaces and who had been one of the most celebrated citizens of Yugoslavia, this knowledge fitted nicely into the University's fund-raising plans. The alumni were cozzened via the *Alumni News* with picture-stories of the artist at work; the press was informed; Mestrovic was asked to strike a medal for a student book award; and the daubers of "abstractions" in their cigar-box art school were put on notice to be more respectful toward the old "philistine" who showed an unconcealed scorn toward their program for Art. Meanwhile, everybody went about the day-to-day business of collecting football scholarships and endowments for chairs in Public Administration, as though the old man's presence in Syracuse was exactly the same as that of Professor X, the noted ornithologist, or Professor Y, whose latest book had earned him a Guggenheim grant.

I was a student then, and as guilty as the others of ignorance and callousness toward Mestrovic. Moreover, I am convinced now that he encouraged the superficiality of our attentions, finding privacy in its falseness, and knowing that it required less of him than if he had had to give of his true self to the University community. If he had once been a celebrated, charismatic figure, he now seemed to favor obscurity. He was usually uncommunicative, even somewhat sullen-looking. While we chattered about the Korean war, Elizabeth Taylor, Faulkner, McCarthy and Mestrovic, all in the same sentences, he carved stone and wooden images of such immense proportions they could barely be contained

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in the little shabby barn in the back yard of an exclusive sorority house.

I used to see Mestrovic quite often in those days and was fascinated by his physical appearance. In my innocence, I thought he resembled Lenin; I was not aware that his exile had been directed against the tyranny of one of Lenin's followers—Marshall Tito. All I was aware of was his calm stare with the lips out-thrust and the massive strength of his short, stocky figure. He had a broad skull, a high forehead, and a fine nose. His beard was tough, bristling, magnetic; it emphasized but did not hide his chin. He used to wear a little beret and a drab heavy scarf and seemed always to be carrying many bulky objects in the pockets of his coat. I used to see him trudging through the dreary, snowed-under streets of town, or near the rose arbor in Thornden Park; and I would occasionally spy him chewing bad hamburgers in one of the campus dives. He was usually alone and seemed unapproachable. It occurred to me then, as it does again now, that he resembled some of his own figures—his Moses, for example, or a fierce guerrilla fighter at rest in one of his impressive Croatian basreliefs.

Once I had the good fortune to sit next to him at a campus meeting of so-called young intellectuals where he had consented to be the honored guest and to talk with the students about Art. Presiding over that meeting was the Chaplain, a liberal type who seemed to occupy himself mostly with delivering informal talks to mixed groups on pre-marital sex. I can recall now, with a renewed sense of shame, the stumbling embarrassment of the proceedings, which got under way with the student chairman asking his guest if he had always wanted to be a sculptor, even as a little boy. Mestrovic muttered an inaudible reply. Then our attention was diverted by the Chaplain who took it upon himself to translate Mestrovic's remarks for the benefit of the students, delivering along the way a sentimental lecture on modern Christian art. I recall the look of incredulous disgust which the sculptor exhibited then, and how sorry I was to have been a party to such a sham.

For if the chairman's question had seemed impertinent or moronic, what followed it was an insult to that gentle stone cutter from Croatia who had grasped his craft through his peasant father. As my young classmates discussed their vocational and emotional problems with the artist, I was aware that there was a good deal of the peasant's simplicity and strength still lurking in the man; and I was also aware after viewing the heroic scale of the figures on which he had worked that Mestrovic's simplicity and his lack of cant had more bite than the sophistication of the intellects against whom he was pitted. It troubled me to have to stare back at his large dark eyes, acknowledging that we could not understand the terms of his beliefs because we had grown so far away from them.

At one point, he turned on a rather foppish-looking young man and suggested that he would make an excellent model for St. John except that he was getting too fat. "I like to see more bones," Mestrovic said. And I remembered how only the day before I had seen a bronze *pieta* in the University museum which had rendered the ferociously devout gesture of Mary shadowing the slain Christ with her head and bosom. I, who liked to think of myself then as an alienated Jew, had glimpsed for a moment a sense of the significance of the Christian myth, the Christian mystery, yet I knew that if I had spoken of the Christian myth or of alienated Jews to Mestrovic, that strong, simple man would have scoffed at my slogans and intellectual pretenses. Or, worse than that, he would have stared silently at me, saying nothing.

THE YEAR I graduated was the same year he was to leave for Notre Dame and a chair as resident sculptor with full honors and plenty of leisure at his disposal. It was a troubled time at the University. There were the cold war jitters affecting all the seniors, and there was a special dissatisfaction, I think, among some of us that our curiosities—our instincts to know and experience—had somehow been fobbed off by the University bureaucrats in exchange for a degree.

When the students learned that Mestrovic was to leave, a movement started spontaneously to have the University purchase some of his work as a memorial to his having been present on the campus. Rather reluctantly, as I recall, the school officials allowed my classmates to send a delegation to Mestrovic to negotiate with some of the class funds. A few small and quite minor things he agreed to give to Syracuse, and I think it is indicative of the man's character, as well as our own crassness, that he chose to sell and we agreed to buy a somewhat clumsy, pagan figure of the goddess Persephone in bronze—a sort of bad compromise between Maillol and Rodin. Perhaps he realized that we were all of us more interested in his name than in the love with which he could transform stone and metal into an utterance. It may be he also knew that the queer elongated distortions of an utterance which had formed the major part of his life's work would have been totally incomprehensible to pagans like ourselves.

RICHARD M. ELMAN

(Mr. Elman, a frequent contributor, has written for the Saturday Review and other magazines.)

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A Time To Be Counted

THE UNITED NATIONS is in serious difficulty. President Kennedy's recent trip to New York to confer with Secretary General U Thant dramatized that fact—as well as the fact that our government is most anxious for the U.N. to survive.

The isolationists among us, of course, would not be sorry to see the end of the United Nations. They have always done their best to hamstring American cooperation with the U.N.; they have scoffed at efforts to create an international rule of law through world organization. But it does not seem to me that isolationism represents the most immediate danger to the U.N. today.

As a theory, isolationism was always a hard thing to defend on moral grounds, at least for a rich and powerful nation. What it amounted to was an abdication of responsibility, a turning-away that left the weak at the mercy of the unscrupulous strong. But in a pre-nuclear, pre-missile age, isolationism was at least physically possible. Today the world has radically changed, and isolationism is not only morally dubious; it is physically impossible.

Even now, of course, there is little hope that many of our isolationist tigers will suddenly change stripes and give the U.N. the kind of support it needs. But what is worrisome is discouragement and apathy among many who could once have been counted on as U.N. supporters. I can see why they feel some disappointment at the way things are going. Who could blame them? But those who now claim total disillusion must have started out with an exaggerated idea of what the U.N. could reasonably be expected to do.

The U.N. now faces two serious threats. One comes, ironically enough, from those nations which stand to lose most if the U.N. is destroyed—the new nations of the Afro-Asian bloc. If their anti-colonialist passion leads them to justify the unilateral use of force in the name of anti-colonialism, as in the recent conquest of Goa by India, they may well bring the U.N. house of nations down. And yet this is a delicate point for Europeans and Americans to discuss, for in doing so we must be aware of our own morally ambiguous position, forced as we are to ask the new nations to do what we say, not what we did or do. If Suez and Cuba are different from Goa, they do not look so different in Asian or African eyes.

The other threat to the U.N. comes, of course, from the Soviet Union. It is more clear-cut and in the long run, I think, far more dangerous. The United Nations has frustrated Soviet ambitions at various points throughout the world, from Korea to the Congo. Now the U.S.S.R. wants to render the international organization impotent or destroy it completely, and it is not hard to see why. But by the same token the U.S. should resist this Soviet purpose by every means possible.

It is true, of course, that things do not always go the way we want them to in the U.N. We have plenty of trouble simply trying to reconcile our own convictions and national interests with those of our allies. The additional handicap of having to cope with Soviet maneuvers in the U.N. sometimes seems just too much. Yet Soviet power, symbolized in the U.N. by its veto, is a fact and it would represent an inescapable threat to us, United Nations or no. To encounter that power in the form of a veto in the Security Council is far better than to meet it in the shape of a jet in the Congo. This, it seems to me, is the paramount point.

At this moment the United Nations needs money badly—hence its decision to issue two hundred million dollars worth of long-term bonds. The tabloid explanation for the current U.N. deficit is that some of the member-states are refusing to pay their own way, but this does not really tell the full story. Nations which fall too far behind in their dues can lose their vote, so non-payment of dues is not the major problem. The real difficulty is that some nations, notably the Soviet Union, Britain and France, will not pay the special assessments for U.N. efforts they do not support, as in Korea, the Middle East, or the Congo, and so far they are able to get away with it.

Obviously this could become a very large problem—although it is also easy to imagine what a furor there would be in this country if we had to pay a special assessment to support some Soviet-backed measure. But for the time being, at least, the decision to raise money by long-term U.N. bonds seems like a good way to get around the issue, and I am sorry that so many in and out of Congress are refusing to back President Kennedy's plan to buy half the issue.

As I read the proposal, these bonds will be redeemed out of normal U.N. revenue in the future—revenue which includes the dues of those nations which now refuse to pay for the U.N. police efforts. The bond proposal, therefore, provides an effective way to pay for U.N. efforts in the world's trouble spots, while at the same time providing a certain amount of face-saving for the nations involved.

For the Soviet Union to try to rule or ruin the U.N. makes sense, since the U.S.S.R. stands to gain mightily from civil war in areas like the Congo. But neither the death of the U.N. nor the division of the Congo into tiny warring states serves United States policy or the cause of world peace. Why, then, should we help the Soviet Union wreck the United Nations by refusing our financial help now? JAMES O'GARA

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THOMAS MERTON

Nuclear War and Christian Responsibility

It is no exaggeration to say that our times are Apocalyptic, in the sense that we seem to have come to a point at which all the hidden, mysterious dynamism of the "history of salvation" revealed in the Bible has flowered into final and decisive crisis.

IT HAS been said so often that it has become a cliché, but it must be said again at the beginning of this article: the world and society of man now face destruction. *Possible* destruction: it is relatively easy, at the present time, to wipe out the entire human race either by nuclear, bacterial or chemical agents, separately or together. *Probable* destruction: the possibility of destruction becomes a probability in proportion as the world's leaders commit themselves more and more irrevocably to policies built on the threat to use these agents of extermination. At the present moment, the United States and the Soviet bloc are committed to a policy of genocide. Not only are they committed to the use of nuclear weapons for self-defense, but even to their use in first-strike attack if it should be expedient. This means that the policies of the United States and Russia are now frankly built on the presumption that each one is able, willing and *ready* to completely destroy the other at a moment's notice by a "first-strike"; that the one destroyed is capable of "post mortem retaliation" that would annihilate not only the attacker but all his allies and satellites, even though the defender were already wiped out himself.

There is no need to insist that in a world where another Hitler is very possible the mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes the most tragic and serious problem that the human race has ever had to contend with. Indeed, the atmosphere of hatred, suspicion and tension in which we all live is precisely what is needed to produce Hitlers.

It is no exaggeration to say that our times are Apocalyptic, in the sense that we seem to have come to a point at which all the hidden, mysterious dynamism of the "history of salvation" revealed in the Bible has flowered into final and decisive crisis. The term "end of the world" may or may not be one that we are capable of understanding. But at any rate we seem to be assisting at the unwrapping of the mysteriously vivid symbols of the last book of the New Testament. In their nakedness, they reveal to us our own selves as the men whose lot it is to live in the time of a possibly ultimate decision.

We know that Christ came into this world as the Prince of Peace. We know that Christ Himself is our peace (Eph. 2:14). We believe that God has chosen for Himself, in the Mystical Body of Christ, an elect people, regenerated by the Blood of the Savior, and committed by their baptismal promise to wage war with the great enemy of peace and salvation. As Pope John XXIII pointed out in his first encyclical letter, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, Christians are obliged to strive for peace "with all the means at their disposal" and yet, as he continues, this peace cannot compromise with error or make concessions to it. Therefore it is by no means a matter of passive acquiescence in injustice, since this does not produce peace. However, the Christian struggle for peace depends first of all upon a free response of man to "God's call to the service of His merciful designs." The lack of man's response to this call, says Pope John,

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is the "most terrible problem of human history" (Christmas message, 1958). Christ Our Lord did not come to bring peace to the world as a kind of spiritual tranquilizer. He brought to His disciples a vocation and a task, to struggle in the world of violence to establish His peace not only in their own hearts but in society itself.

The Christian is and must be by his very adoption as a son of God, in Christ, a peacemaker (Matt. 5:9). He is bound to imitate the Savior who, instead of defending Himself with twelve legions of Angels (Matt. 26:55) allowed Himself to be nailed to the Cross and died praying for His executioners. The Christian is one whose life has sprung from a particular spiritual seed: the blood of the martyrs who, without offering forcible resistance, laid down their lives rather than submit to the unjust laws that demanded an official religious cult of the Emperor as God. That is to say, the Christian is bound, like the martyrs, to obey God rather than the state whenever the state tries to usurp powers that do not and cannot belong to it. We have repeatedly seen Christians in our time fulfilling this obligation in a heroic manner by their resistance to dictatorships that strove to interfere with the rights of their conscience and of their religion.

WE ARE no longer living in a Christian world. The ages which we are pleased to call the "ages of Faith" were certainly not ages of earthly paradise. But at least our forefathers officially recognized and favored the Christian ethic of love. They fought some very bloody and un-Christian wars, and in doing so they also committed great crimes which remain in history as a permanent scandal. However, certain definite limits were recognized. Today a non-Christian world still retains a few vestiges of Christian morality, a few formulas and clichés, which serve on appropriate occasions to adorn indignant editorials and speeches. But otherwise we witness deliberate campaigns to eliminate all education in Christian truth and morality. The Christian ethic of love tends to be discredited as phony and sentimental.

It is therefore a serious error to imagine that because the West was once largely Christian, the cause of the Western nations is now to be identified, without further qualification, with the cause of God. The incentive to wipe out Bolshevism may well be one of the apocalyptic temptations of twentieth-century Christendom. It may indeed be the most effective way of destroying Christendom, even though man may survive. For who imagines that the Asians and Africans will respect Christianity and embrace it after it has apparently triggered mass-murder and destruction of cosmic proportions? It is pure madness to think that Christianity can defend itself with nuclear weapons. The mere fact that we now seem to accept nuclear war as reasonable is a universal scandal.

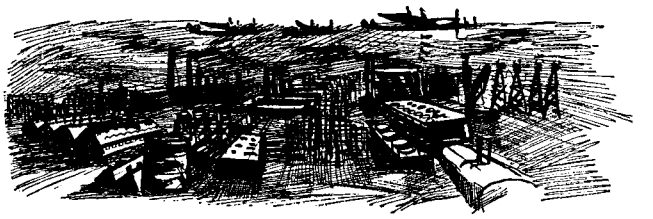
True, Christianity is not only opposed to Communism, but is in a very real sense at war with it. This warfare, however, is spiritual and ideological. "Devoid of material weapons," says Pope John, "the Church is the trustee of the highest spiritual power." If the Church has no military weapons of her own, it means that her wars are fought without any weapons at all and not that she intends to call upon the weapons of nations that were once Christian.

WE MUST remember that the Church does not belong to any political power bloc. Christianity exists on both sides of the Iron Curtain and we should feel ourselves united by very special bonds with those Christians who, living under Communism, often suffer heroically for their principles.

Is it a valid defense of Christianity for us to wipe out these heroic Christians along with their oppressors, for the sake of "religious freedom?" It is pure sophistry to claim that physical annihilation in nuclear war is a *"lesser evil"* than the difficult conditions under which these Christians continue to live, perhaps with true heroism and sanctity preserving their faith and witnessing very effectively to Christ in the midst of atheism. Persecution is certainly a physical evil and a spiritual danger, but Christ has said that those who suffer persecution in His Name are blessed. (Matt. 5:10-12)

At the same time, one of the most disturbing things about the Western world of our time is that it is beginning to have much more in common with the Communist world than it has with the professedly Christian society of several centuries ago. On both sides of the Iron Curtain we find two profoundly disturbing varieties of the same moral sickness: both of them rooted in the same fundamentally materialist view of life. Both are basically opportunistic and pragmatic in their own way. And both have the following characteristics in common. On the level of *morality* they are blindly passive in their submission to a determinism which, in effect, leaves men completely irresponsible. Therefore moral obligations and decisions have become practically meaningless. At best they are only forms of words, rationalizations of pragmatic decisions that have already been dictated by the needs of the moment.

Naturally, since not everyone is an unprincipled materialist even in Russia, there is bound to be some moral sense at work, even if only as a guilt-feeling that



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produces uneasiness and hesitation, blocking the smooth efficiency of machine-like obedience to immoral commands. Yet the history of Nazi Germany shows us how appalling was the irresponsibility which would carry out even the most revolting of crimes under cover of "obedience" for the sake of a "good cause." This moral passivity is the most terrible danger of our time, as the American Bishops have already pointed out in their joint letters of 1960 and 1961.

On the level of political, economic and military activity, this moral passivity is balanced, or overbalanced, by a *demonic activism,* a frenzy of the most varied, versatile, complex and even utterly brilliant technological improvisations, following one upon the other with an ever more bewildering and uncontrollable proliferation. Politics pretends to use this force as its servant, to harness it for social purposes, for the "good of man." The intention is good. The technological development of power in our time is certainly a risk and challenge, but that does not make it intrinsically evil. On the contrary, it can and should be a very great good. In actual fact, however, the furious speed with which our technological world is plunging toward disaster is evidence that no one is any longer fully in control—and this includes the political leaders.

A simple study of the steps which led to the dropping of the first A-bomb on Hiroshima is devastating evidence of the way well-meaning men, the scientists and leaders of a victorious nation, were guided step by step, without realizing it, by the inscrutable yet simple "logic of events" to fire the shot that was to make the cold war inevitable and prepare the way perhaps inexorably for World War III. This they did purely and simply because they thought in all sincerity that the bomb was the simplest and most merciful way of ending World War II and perhaps all wars, forever.

THE TRAGEDY of our time is then not so much the malice of the wicked as the helpless futility even of the best intentions of "the good." There are warmakers, war criminals, indeed. They are present and active on *both sides.* But all of us, in our very best efforts for peace, find ourselves maneuvered unconsciously into positions where we too can act as war criminals. For there can be no doubt that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were, though not fully deliberate crimes, nevertheless crimes. And who was responsible? No one. Or "history." We cannot go on playing with nuclear fire and shrugging off the results as "history." We are the ones concerned. We are the ones responsible. History does not make us, we make it—or end it.

In plain words, in order to save ourselves from destruction we have to try to regain control of a world that is speeding downhill without brakes, because of the combination of factors I have just mentioned: almost total passivity and irresponsibility on the moral level, plus demonic activism in social, military and political life. The remedy would seem to be to slow down our activity, especially all activity concerned with the production and testing of weapons of destruction, and indeed to back-track by making every effort to negotiate for multilateral disarmament.

This may be of great help, but still only a palliative, not a solution. Yet *at least this* is perhaps feasible, and should at all costs be attempted, even at the cost of great sacrifice and greater risk. It is not morally licit for us as a nation to refuse the risk merely because our whole economy now depends on this war-effort. On the contrary, our national reliance on this substantial source of income and profit hardly qualifies as Christian.

Equally important, and perhaps even more difficult than disarmament, is the restoration of some moral sense and the resumption of genuine responsibility. Without this it is illusory for us to speak of freedom and "control." Unfortunately, even where moral principles are still regarded with some degree of respect, morality has lost touch with the realities of our situation. Moralists tend to discuss the problems of atomic war as if men still fought with bows and arrows. Modern warfare is fought as much by machines as by men. Even a great deal of the planning depends on the work of mechanical computers. An entirely new dimension is opened up by the fantastic processes and techniques involved. An American President can speak of warfare in outer space and nobody bursts out laughing—he is perfectly serious. Science-fiction and the comic strips have all suddenly come true. When a missile armed with an H-bomb warhead is fired by the pressing of a button and its target is a whole city, the number of its victims is estimated in "megacorpses"—*millions* of dead human beings. A thousand or ten thousand more here and there are not even matter for comment. Under such conditions can there be serious meaning left in the fine decisions that were elaborated by scholastic theologians in the day of hand-to-hand combat? Can we assume that in atomic war the conditions which make double effect legitimate will be realized? Obviously not. And to make this perfectly clear, the explicit and formal declarations of governments leave no doubt that indiscriminate destruction is intended.

IN ATOMIC war, there is no longer question of simply permitting an evil, the destruction of a few civilian dwellings, in order to attain a legitimate end: the destruction of a military target. It is well understood on both sides that atomic war is purely and simply massive and indiscriminate destruction of targets chosen not for their military significance alone, but for their importance in a calculated project of terror and annihilation. Often the selection of the target is determined by some quite secondary and accidental circumstance that

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has not the remotest reference to morality. Hiroshima was selected for atomic attack, among other reasons, because it had never undergone any noticeable air bombing and was suitable, as an intact target, to give a good idea of the effectiveness of the bomb.

It must be frankly admitted that some of the military commanders of both sides in World War II simply disregarded all traditional standards that were still effective. The Germans threw those standards overboard with the bombs they unloaded on Warsaw, Rotterdam, Coventry and London. The allies replied in kind with the saturation bombing of Hamburg, Cologne, Dresden and Berlin. Spokesmen were not wanting on either side, to justify these crimes against humanity. And today, while "experts" calmly discuss the possibility of the United States being able to survive a war if *"only fifty millions"(!)* of the population are killed; when the Chinese speak of being able to *"spare"* three hundred million and "still get along," it is obvious that we are no longer in the realm where moral truth is conceivable.

The only sane course that remains is to work frankly and without compromise for the total abolition of war. The pronouncements of the Holy See all point to this as the only ultimate solution. The first duty of the Christian is to help clarify thought on this point by taking the stand that all-out nuclear, bacterial or chemical warfare is unacceptable as a practical solution to international problems because it would mean the destruction of the world. There is simply no "good end" that renders such a risk permissible or even thinkable on the level of ordinary common sense.

At this point someone will say "The Church has not condemned nuclear war." First of all there is no need to condemn something that already quite obviously stands condemned by its very nature. Total war is murder. The fact that the Church tolerates limited war and even theoretically tolerates the limited use of "tactical" nuclear weapons for defensive purposes does not mean that she either advocates or tolerates indiscriminate killing of civilians and military. Pope Pius XII, in 1954, made this perfectly clear. He said: *"Should the evil consequences of adopting this method of warfare ever become so extensive as to pass entirely beyond the control of man, then indeed its use must be rejected as immoral."* Uncontrolled annihilation of human life is "not lawful under any title." There is much debate over the term "entirely beyond control." If a missile with a nuclear warhead can be aimed so as to destroy Leningrad rather than Helsinki, is this sufficient to be termed control? One doubts this was the mind of Pius XII.

It might be possible to get people to admit this in theory, but it is going to be very difficult in practice. They will admit the theory because they will say that they "certainly do not want a war" in which nuclear agents will be used on an all-out scale. Obviously no one wants the destruction of the human race or of his own nation, although he will not admit it in practice because foreign policy entirely depends on wielding the threat of nuclear destruction. But in an issue of such desperate seriousness, we have to face the fact that the calculated use of nuclear weapons as a political threat is almost certain to lead eventually to a hot war. Every time another hydrogen bomb is exploded in a test, every time a political leader boasts his readiness to use the same bomb on the cities of his enemy, we get closer to the day when the missiles armed with nuclear warheads will start winging their way across the seas and the polar ice cap.

The danger must be faced. Whoever finds convenient excuses for this adventurous kind of policy, who rationalizes every decision dictated by political opportunism and justifies it, must stop to consider that he may be himself cooperating in the evil. On the contrary, our duty is to help emphasize with all the force at our disposal that the Church earnestly seeks the abolition of war; we must underscore declarations like those of Pope John XXIII pleading with world leaders to renounce force in the settlement of international disputes and confine themselves to negotiation.

LET US suppose that the political leaders of the world, supported by the mass media in their various countries, and carried onward by a tidal wave of ever greater and greater war preparations, see themselves swept inexorably into a war of disastrous proportions. Let us suppose that it becomes morally certain that these leaders are helpless to arrest the blind force of the process that has been irresponsibly set in motion. What then? Are the masses of the world, including you and me, to resign themselves to their fate and march on to global suicide without resistance, simply bowing their heads and obeying their leaders as showing them the "will of God"? I think it should be evident to everyone that this can no longer, in the present situation, be accepted unequivocally as Christian obedience and civic duty.

On the contrary, this brings us face to face with the greatest and most agonizing moral issue of our time. This issue is not merely nuclear war, not merely the possible destruction of the human race by a sudden explosion of violence. It is something more subtle and more demonic. If we continue to yield to theoretically irresponsible determinism and to vague "historic forces" without striving to resist and to control them, if we let these forces drive us to demonic activism in the realm of politics and technology, we face something more than the material evil of universal destruction. We face *the moral responsibility of global suicide.* Much more than that, we are going to find ourselves gradually moving into a situation in which we are practically compelled by the "logic of circumstances" deliberately *to choose the course that leads to destruction.*

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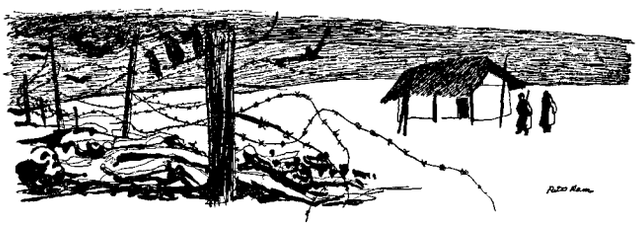
We all know the logic of temptation. We all know the vague, hesitant irresponsibility which leads us into the situation where it is no longer possible to turn back and how, arrived in that situation, we have a moment of clear-sighted desperation in which we freely commit ourselves to the course that we recognize to be evil. That may well be what is happening now to the whole world. The actual destruction of the human race is an enormous evil, but it is still, in itself, only a physical evil. Yet the free choice of global suicide, made in desperation by the world's leaders and ratified by the consent and cooperation of all their citizens, would be a moral evil second only to the crucifixion. The fact that such a choice might be made with the highest motives and the most urgent purpose would do nothing whatever to mitigate it. The fact that it might be made as a gamble, in the hope that some might escape, would never excuse it. After all, the purposes of Caiphas were, in his own eyes, perfectly noble. He thought it was necessary to let "one man die for the people."

The most urgent necessity of our time is therefore not merely to prevent the destruction of the human race by nuclear war. Even if it should happen to be no longer possible to prevent the disaster (which God forbid), there is still a greater evil that can and must be prevented. It must be possible for every free man to refuse his consent and deny his cooperation to this greatest of crimes.

IN WHAT does this effective and manifest refusal of consent consist? How does one "resist" the sin of genocide? How are the conscientious objectors to mass suicide going to register their objection and their refusal to cooperate? Ideally speaking, in the imaginary case where all-out nuclear war seemed inevitable and the world's leaders seemed morally incapable of preventing it, it would become legitimate and even obligatory for all sane and conscientious men everywhere in the world to lay down their weapons and their tools and starve and be shot rather than cooperate in the war effort. If such a mass movement should spontaneously arise in all parts of the world, in Russia and America, in China and France, in Africa and Germany, the human race could be saved from extinction. This is indeed an engaging hypothesis—but it is no more than that. It would be folly to suppose that men hitherto passive, inert, morally indifferent and irresponsible might suddenly recover their sense of obligation and their awareness of their own power when the world was on the very brink of war. Indeed we have already reached that point. Who says "No!" except for a few isolated individuals regarded almost generally as crackpots by everybody else?



It is vitally necessary that we form our conscience in regard to our own participation in the effort that threatens to lead us to universal destruction. We have to be convinced that there are certain things already clearly forbidden to all men, such as the use of torture, the killing of hostages, genocide (or the mass extermination of racial, national or other groups for no reason than that they belong to an "undesirable" category). The destruction of civilian centers by nuclear annihilation bombing is genocide. We have to become aware of the poisonous effect of the mass media that keep violence, cruelty and sadism constantly present in the minds of uninformed and irresponsible people. We have to recognize the danger to the whole world in the fact that today the economic life of the more highly-developed nations is centered largely on the production of weapons, missiles and other engines of destruction. We have to consider that hate propaganda, and the consistent nagging and baiting of one government by another, has always inevitably led to violent conflict. We have to recognize the implications of voting for politicians who promote policies of hate.

These are activities which, in view of their possible consequences, are so dangerous and absurd as to be morally intolerable. If we cooperate in these activities we share in the guilt they incur before God. It is no longer reasonable or right to leave all decisions to a largely anonymous power elite that is driving us all, in our passivity, towards ruin. We have to make ourselves heard. Christians have a grave responsibility to protest clearly and forcibly against trends that lead inevitably to crimes which the Church deplores and condemns. Ambiguity, hesitation and compromise are no longer permissible. War must be abolished. A world government must be established. We have still time to do something about it, but the time is rapidly running out.

Visitation

The monk who planted pine trees
Stomped beneath the bluegrass sky.
Glades and gullies echoed
The rumor of his footfall—
Rabbits jumped out of the bush,
Stars shivered in the dew.
He grieved the occasional blight
In his novitiate of pines.
He touched the tinder spires—
Greenfire sang in the burnt man's bones.

THOMAS P. MCDONNELL

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Before It Is Too Late

NINO MARITANO

WHEN I left Guatemala, the last of five Central American countries I visited, it was my impression that people of Central America are well aware of what is going on in their countries and abroad. Perhaps because of this increasing awareness they are tired of words and promises.

It was made clear to me, by thousands of workers, *campesinos* (small farmers) and professional men in the Central American nations that changes ought to take place. According to them a radical institutional evolution is necessary to break away from the present feudalistic form of society in which they live. I was told time and again that if drastic changes do not materialize soon, the Communists will have excellent grounds for their own revolution. But the people of Central America do not expect such changes to come from their wealthy present leaders, whom they distrust and hate. Thus Communism seems to them as almost the only certain alternative.

Central Americans, like all Latin Americans, have long memories. They remind you of the time when the great fruit companies, by their political and financial intrigues, kept large areas of Central America in turmoil. They did not hide from this writer the fact that even today venality and "influence" play a disastrous role in the economic development of their countries. They do not expect any improvement from fantastic and vague economic programs. Empty and non-implemented social legislation can no longer satisfy the hungry and destitute seventy-five per cent of the population of Central America.

Besides, it is written in their eyes, they want a better life for themselves and for their children "today," not "tomorrow." But with the disparity between wages and prices—when there is a wage and a price—it is simply not possible for most Central Americans to make a living. Prices are high and capricious all over Central America. I discovered that a cup of coffee in El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras costs from ten to twelve cents. A bottle of local beer costs from thirty-five to fifty cents. A decent room in any hotel or pension goes from five to fifteen dollars. A sandwich costs from forty-five to seventy cents. The price of clothes is as high as in the United States—always higher than in any country in Europe. I found in El Salvador and Nicaragua, which are among the poorest nations of Central America, that it costs twenty-five dollars to have a tooth filled, twenty dollars to have it pulled. Any physical examination by any doctor costs from five to twenty dollars. Local shoes vary from eight to fifteen dollars; imported shoes cost from thirty-five to fifty dollars.

Yet wages all over are as low as thirty to fifty cents a day. The average wage for ninety per cent of Central American workers is less than seventy-five cents a day. A waiter or waitress, for example, earns not more than ten to twenty dollars a month, putting in around sixty hours a week and ten hours of work a day.

NO SALVADORIAN, Nicaraguan, Costa Rican or Guatemalan I met accepts such wages as just in countries where members of old Spanish families pad through the halls of mansions costing three, four or five million dollars. Moreover, such wages are for those who are lucky enough to get a job. If one adds to all this the chronic unemployment in all cities and towns of the Central American nations, the creeping inflation, the average earnings of many *campesinos* which amounts to something like three or four dollars a month, one begins to understand the economic despair of so many of the Central American people, their impatience and bitterness, their readiness to revolt.

Why, they ask you, should a very few in our countries (four or five per cent of the population) dance in a sea of gold and light and ninety per cent of the people in rural areas huddle at night around a fire outside a one-room hut and wash the only clothes they own at the light of a meager flame? Why, ask a group of young workers from El Salvador, should the sons and daughters of the few rich go to study at the most expensive colleges and universities abroad, touring Washington, Rome, and Paris in Cadillacs, when seventy per cent or more of the families from Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador are unable to have their children fed decently and taught how to read and write? I heard the same question echoed in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala.

The claim of the local aristocracy that the poor in Central America enjoy their way of life and have no desire to improve their social and economic conditions makes them laugh bitterly. Like any other human beings, Central American men and women prefer adequate housing to a hut. All poor young couples wish that they

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could afford better furniture in their dwellings and decent clothes for their little ones. No destitute Indian in Guatemala, no unemployed worker in El Salvador or Nicaragua, no poor mother from Costa Rica or Honduras I talked to blesses the hunger and death of her children, or wishes them to grow up ignorant and illiterate.

It is also unfair and false to say, as I heard many Europeans and Americans insist, that the average Central American is lazy and does not want to work. I saw thousands of them at work: businessmen, professional people, government employees, skilled and manual workers of both sexes. Those who can find work, work hard—in many instances much harder than we do. No American or European woman could stand the fatigue and hardship of the average Salvadorian or Guatemalan woman in the fields, in a factory or in a market place. The American construction worker would call slave labor the hours and the speed required from a Costa Rican or a Nicaraguan construction worker.

One would have to go back one or two hundred years in the history of this country or of Europe to find conditions comparable to the inhuman conditions borne by people working for a few absentee barons, landlords or corporations in Central America. But no matter how bad those conditions are, how meager the reward is, the average Central American wants to work; he is constantly looking for a steady employment.

THE POOR resent, moreover, the fact that even in these abject conditions they are the only people in their countries who pay high taxes. They realize that since the governments themselves are deep in the affairs of business, people in privileged positions of government will not tax themselves. As a matter of fact, this interlocking of government and business is so widespread and so grave in Nicaragua and Honduras that it is difficult to say where private enterprise stops and public enterprise takes over. In too many parts of Central America the governors and senators are the most economically and financially powerful persons. They are owners of banks, plantations, shipping, urban real estate, airlines, railroad companies. On top of this, there is not a progressive but rather a regressive taxation system. For instance, it is impossible for the poor to escape tax eviction, but it is a mere question of routine for the rich to evade millions of dollars in taxation.

Many Central American economists and honest businessmen I talked to are convinced that this abusive system of taxation, among other things, explains a great deal of the backwardness of the Central American economy. Honest fiscal policy and effective public administration of the physical and human resources, they believe, are basic requirements for the economic development of their countries. But honest and effective administrations, according to some able and brilliant Salvadorian public servants, are impossible without a more human social philosophy, which too many political leaders and the wealthy elite alike lack totally.

Without some effective principles of human rights, and of equitable redistribution of wealth, no capital formation for sound investments, they feel, is really possible. No foreign aid will do any good. On this point, it was a shocking experience for me to find out in a survey taken among all groups of Central American people that more than ninety per cent of them are against unconditional American aid. President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress will be a failure, they tell you, if every American cent is not supervised by honest American technicians with the help of honest and able Central Americans.

As a matter of fact, as far as I could see, the American dollars which have been poured into Central America have not won for us a single friend among the mass of people. The average Central American dislikes and is suspicious of the *Gringos*. One reason for this, among others, I was told, is the fact that they have never seen any good results from American loans or grants. American money is too often used, or rather misused, for personal advantage. Thus the unemployed in El Salvador, the oppressed in Nicaragua, the poor *campesino* in Honduras, the underpaid worker in Costa Rica and the Indian in Guatemala all feel that the American dollars, if they come, serve in fact only one purpose: to keep in power inefficient governments and to perpetuate the startling contrast of economic misery for the majority and extravagant wealth for the few.

The sympathy for President Kennedy found among people of all the Central American nations is, I believe, quite significant in this regard. Kennedy understands our situation, they say. He is realistic, honest and blunt. They think that if the social reform conditions of the Alliance for Progress are carried out, lots of things will be improved. But they all predicted to me that any such clause of conditional help will be opposed by most of their governments.

IT IS the deep conviction of this writer that the Central American people are not really Communist or Communistic, but they do have a deep and increasing desire for social justice. They are not rebellious people, either,

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but misery and despair, if not drastically curbed, can in the very near future force them to become both rebellious and Communist. The governments of Central America give the impression of being afraid of sound social economic reforms. Some of them let the people believe that any social change will be economically disastrous by invoking the outmoded classical liberal theory of capital formation. This is an old story which no economist would accept today. On the contrary, a minimum of social justice, in terms of honest administration, sound fiscal policy, better redistribution of income, a minimum wage and job opportunity, constitute the very necessary conditions and bases for economic development, growth and progress.

Drastic social reforms are not only the sole alternative to Castroism or Communism in Central America, but also the only way out of the economic backwardness and bankruptcy of a feudalistic system, and the only way that political and economic democracy can appeal to the intelligent Central American.

Let us not label as Communistic the elementary aspirations of the citizens of Central America. These aspirations are too human and too Christian to be confused with the brutality of Communism. But they are also too urgent to be ignored. The future of much more than Central America itself is at stake; it would be a tragedy for the whole hemisphere if Central America were lost. I must confess, however, that I left Central America with the feeling that if it is already late for some Central America governments, it is too late altogether for the irresponsible Central American aristocracy.

The Dancer

(for Janet Collins)

We, too illiterate in body's language
To spell the grandeur of your gesture out,
Can render in ungainly words a tribute
And say: you made a prison of the stage,

You were wind's thrust, geometry's precision
A single self, an energy at ease
That neither stage nor world could hold or please,
Refuting those who call the body prison.

Your dance rebuked the slackness of our flesh,
Revealed the poverty within our wish
To shed the skin, to be hatched out pure soul:

This was the Adam flesh that moved in pride
And grace, loving mind and will's control,
And this, and more than this, flesh glorified.

JOSEPH P. CLANCY

THE STAGE

Shadows and Substance

THORNTON WILDER is probably our culture's finest living example of *faute de mieux*. He is our stage philosopher, in the absence of any other, our house allegorist, the man we turn to for civilizing counter-influences to the practices of the new barbarians. He is much loved by the reflective, the humanistic, the homespun, the quietly patriotic, the slightly disenchanted, the moderately iconoclastic, and all who crave "satisfying evenings in the theater." All of which is not to say that he lacks real virtues; there is no denying that he is one of our most accomplished stylists, whose easy art is hard to dislike and harder to dislodge.

At least it is hard to dislike "Our Town" and "The Skin of Our Teeth," and they continue to hold tenaciously to their places in the American repertoire. But "Plays for Bleecker Street," Wilder's first appearance in some years, is another matter. These three one-acters, for all that they exhibit some of their author's ingratiating qualities and possess a good deal of the virtuosity of their predecessors, recommend themselves in the end rather strongly to our distaste, since—all the hullaballoo to the contrary—they are thin, strained, ultimately vacuous and without power to obtain the least grasp on our imaginations.

They are the first plays of a cycle, or rather several related cycles, which Wilder has been working on for a long time and which he clearly intends to be his *summa*. Their titles ought to have forewarned us. For in composing a series called "The Seven Ages of Man" and another called "The Seven Deadly Sins," Wilder betrays his obsession with numbers, which is an aspect of his strong Platonic bent. He once wrote that the key words in "Our Town" were hundred, thousand, and million, by which he meant that the play was concerned with quantities, generalities and universals, the specific data—Grover's Corners and its inhabitants—serving as instances and objectifications of the broadest kinds of truth and laws.

Wilder, it seems clear, is forever seeking such instances, or exemplifications, for the illustration of large, pre-existing ideas, or categories of ideas (the process is evident in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* as well as in the plays). Together with his allegorizing, which springs from it, and his use of a vocabulary of truisms and clichés inserted into contexts of incongruity and mellow irony, which fleshes it out, this Platonic habit of thought constitutes his stock-in-trade as a dramatist.

It has had its successes, carrying "Our Town" along the broad, gently flowing quasi-philosophical stream that made its specific banalities endurable, and lending to "The Skin of Our Teeth" its partially redeeming

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quality of epic speculative nonsense combined with humanistic affirmation. But in the new works, perhaps because of their brevity, the weaknesses of this kind of imagination—its tendency to drown the particular in the general and its attenuated sense of conflict—are much more sharply revealed.

The first playlet, "Someone from Assisi," which is listed as Number Four, or "Lust," from "The Seven Deadly Sins," suffers from more radical deficiencies than even those, and actually seems beyond critical analysis. In it Wilder has attempted to illustrate the sin by dramatizing its effects, having St. Francis, in the plenitude of his revolutionary asceticism, encounter a woman he had seduced during that rake's life before his conversion and who is now mad as a consequence.

What results, after some extraordinary banal and flaccid dialogue, during which nothing is either tested, explored or given point, is a heavy-handed coming down on the idea that the saint, in his shame, now possesses the fullness of poverty—nothingness. The impression one carries away, however, is of nothingness in the dramatic not the theological sense, and the sin the play seems to have grown out of is, sad to say, not lust but sloth.

"Childhood," Number Two from "The Seven Ages of Man," is considerably better. Here Wilder is back in his element—that sea of fantasy in which only objects with portentous exteriors but hollow centers can safely float—and his wit and learning, which are those of a combination cracker-barrel philosopher and psychiatrist, or alienist, from about 1913, have a chance to flower. His children act out their perverse games ("Hospital," "Orphans") under the eyes of their uncomprehending split-level parents, and the whole thing has a degree of humor and wispy charm. But the informing idea—that parents are "just people in our game, you're not alive"—is neither original nor profound, so that one feels at the end like crying out, with that wiser, legendary child, "But he's naked, can't you see?"

Finally, "Infancy," Number One from "The Seven Ages." It is quite funny, in a broad farcical style—that is the first thing to say for it. The second is that it is surely a piece of ingenuity to have grown men, in bonnets and baby carriages, playing infants. But though the situation permits Wilder his broadest effects and we do laugh, it comes with embarrassment, as though some rather inferior response had been set off. Beyond that, the play's governing notions, in this case that infants know and want more than we think they do and that they and we would exchange roles if it were possible, aren't very satisfying.

Perhaps they would be if something had been found to make them more dramatically viable, to give them more presence. But they, and the men in the carriages, and the mother and nurse and policeman, and all the characters from the other plays, finally exist as schemes in a mind, as conceits, as Platonic essences. And of course nobody has ever seen one of those. (*At the Circle-in-the-Square.*) RICHARD GILMAN

THE SCREEN

Mother Wins; Uncle Loses

IN TODAY'S crazy, mixed-up world of film production, Americans go to Italy to make a movie, while French and Italians come here. Hollywood unions may protest the so-called runaway productions, but they can't get around the fact that the films—with their mixture of nationalities—are often exceedingly impressive and have a real international flavor.

Since all of "Light in the Piazza" (MGM) takes place in Florence (except for a brief excursion in Rome), it was inevitable that producer Arthur Freed should shoot his picture in that beautiful city; and Florence never looked more beautiful than it does in the stunning color photography displayed on Cinemascope's wide screen. Because two of the story's four main characters are American tourists, a mother and daughter from Winston-Salem, N.C., the camera seems to take pleasure—and passes it on to us—in accompanying them on their sightseeing in the obvious splendors of the churches, palaces, galleries and piazzas.

But the camera also trails along later in the less-known byways when the mother, anxious to elude the young Italian who is pursuing her daughter, hits the unlikely but often attractive spots. Mama, however, is unsuccessful in escaping the persistent boy, a Florentine who knows every corner of his famous city and is as charmed by the lovely American girl as she is by him.

The problem in "Light in the Piazza" would have interested Henry James, E. M. Forster, and any other novelist concerned with innocents abroad, those travelers who come laden with their own worries and are naive babes in the hands of wily natives. This mother's main worry is her pretty daughter who, alas, because of a childhood accident, has the mentality of a ten-year-old. But this beautiful young woman, now twenty-six, has a natural interest in young men, and the mother, out of fairness to all concerned, watches over her like a caretaker. Her efforts to keep her daughter away from the handsome, pursuing Italian boy are in vain.

Julian Epstein has done an excellent job in his script in capturing the essence and quality of Elizabeth Spencer's fine short novel. And so has Guy Green in directing his good cast. Delicate Yvette Mimieux plays the retarded girl with a charming simplicity that is most appealing; and her scenes with George Hamilton as the love-sick Italian have a gay and wholesome tone that is a delight. It even convinces the mother that perhaps,

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perhaps, this budding romance between her daughter and this light-headed boy could work out.

Olivia de Havilland handles the difficult role of the harassed mother well. She may be too calculating at times, too much the American club woman determined to fight for her daughter's happiness, but she plays the part with conviction. It is the brief visit in Rome with her husband (Barry Sullivan), who wants to put the girl in an institution, that helps the perplexed mother make up her mind. She hurries back to Florence to push the marriage—and meets her equal in the boy's suave father, played to perfection by Rossano Brazzi.

What with all its beauty and delicate story, "Light in the Piazza" could easily have spilled over into sentimentality; and it is to the credit of everyone concerned that it did not. Furthermore, through a series of intelligent and skillfully handled little touches, the film succeeds in making the viewer agree with the mother at the finale: "I did the right thing. I know I did." These touches may not be particularly complimentary to the position of women in Italy, but they make a great deal of sense.

SINCE ALL of "A View from the Bridge" (Continental) takes place in Brooklyn, French producer Paul Graetz wisely brought his cast here. The dock and street scenes were beautifully photographed in black-and-white in Brooklyn, while the interior shots (mostly Eddie Carbone's apartment) were done in a Paris studio. The finished production is outstanding in every department.

My main complaint with the movie goes back to Arthur Miller's original play, a pretentious two-act affair embellished with a one-man Greek chorus who attempted to give some universality to the sad story of an ignorant longshoreman who was in love with his wife's niece and would stoop to any desperate measures to prevent her marrying the young man of her choice. Arthur Miller, himself, later expanded the play; and from this Norman Rosten has written his admirable script. He wisely dropped the Greek chorus; but his script and the whole film strain too hard to be great tragedy—as if the petty problems of this stupid and jealous Italian-American dockhand were on a level with the woes of Oedipus or Othello.

Yet the acting under Sidney Lumet's superb direction is almost worthy of an Oedipus or Othello theme. Raf Vallone, who has shone in many an Italian film, is excellent as the muscular dockworker whose lack of understanding of himself and his motives leads to his childish behavior and tragic suicide. Vallone looks and acts as if he were the tormented Eddie Carbone.

Vallone is surrounded by a cast who fit perfectly the roles of his family and associates who come to know him better than he knows himself: Maureen Stapleton as his neglected wife who's wise to the situation and pleads for his love; winsome Carol Lawrence as her lively niece who doesn't realize what's behind her uncle's interest until she falls in love with the young immigrant who lives with them; Morris Carnovsky as a waterfront lawyer, the film's closest approach to the play's Greek Chorus; and Raymond Pellegrin and Jean Sorel as Mrs. Carbone's cousins from Sicily who live with the Carbones. Pellegrin is the wiser and older of these two brothers who grasps Eddie's obsession immediately, and Sorel the handsome young fellow in love with Eddie's niece.

"A View from the Bridge" catches well the feel of community and place and of a man's downfall; and the compelling film holds one's interest. Since these people are supposedly Catholic, however, some sense of their religion should have found its way into their story. The plot, itself, stretched as it is to 110 minutes and covering mainly an ignoble muscle-man's lust and jealousy, becomes a great deal of pother unworthy of all this attention and fine production. For all its realism and good acting and efforts at serious tragedy, "A View from the

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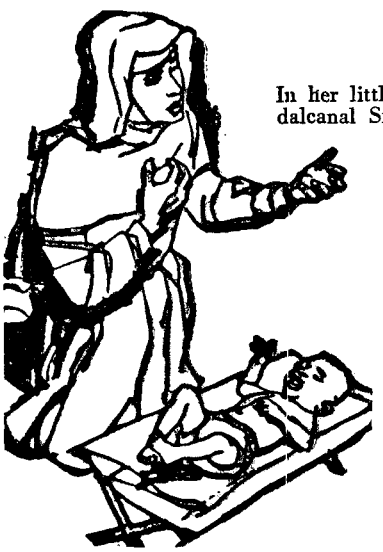

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Bridge" belongs less with "Oedipus" and "Othello" than with O'Neill's expressionistic try of the '20s, "The Hairy Ape."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"Church and Synagogue"

Marblehead, Mass.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Taylor's "Church and Synagogue" [Dec. 29] is certainly filled with the good feeling appropriate to the holiday season, but it appears to me to misunderstand Jewish motivation for pursuing the "Dialogue."

As this Jewish reader of The Commonweal sees it, the whole "Dialogue" movement is pursued from the Jewish side, whence most such activities originate, by a natural desire to put an end to anti-Semitism—not to search for common roots, relationships and other such historico-philosophical niceties. To most Jews, Christianity constitutes the main substance of an "ideology" of anti-Semitism and the question is how to root it out. So, we have "Dialogue" in the hope that maybe if we stop all this "Christ-killer" talk, eliminate the Oberammergau Passion Play, revise the Catechism, etc., perhaps the behavior of Christians towards Jews will be favorably influenced.

Jews, generally, are not religious, by any precise definition of the term. Perhaps the same can be said of Christians, generally. (Most students of contemporary Jews and Judaism would acknowledge that the religious-ethnic-historical elements in Judaism are so inextricably intertwined, that once Jews were sprung from the ghetto, they couldn't tell sacred from secular.) Further, those Jews who are knowledgeable about their faith deem it infinitely more mature philosophically than Christianity and therefore see nothing in Christianity for Jews to add to their own world view.

It seems to me, therefore, that the essentially secularly-oriented Jew relates and wants to relate to Catholics, Moslems, etc., as *men*, not as Catholics, Moslems, etc. In my opinion, the dialogue should be between men *qua* men, not as professional theologians. The reason that our social lives are lived in such appallingly sectarian fashion is not because of differences in religious philosophy. Dr. Taylor's story of the mother whose child was converted to Catholicism and who felt reassured because of alleged philosophical identities between the two faiths is wholly unrealistic. The differences between us are based on long, bitter, historical experience, unfortunately still perpetuated in our present social structure.

By all means, let Catholic (Christian) and Jew engage in dialogue. But let it be the dialogue of Martin Buber's "I and Thou," the dialogue that transcends religious, cultural, racial and national differences, the dialogue that joins man and man. It seems to me that the religious dialogue can be at best a technique—a questionable means to better human relations, thinly disguised as dispassionate philosophical inquiry. There must be a more direct path.

LOUIS L. BRIN

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: The direction taken by the Jewish-Catholic dialogue in the United States, as recently and ably discussed by Jerome Taylor [Dec. 29], is most significant. In Europe, and particularly in France where the dialogue has been going on for many years, the ground for communicating had to be cleared first of accumulated resentment. Indeed, in Europe, who among the Jews can forget nearly two thousand years of persecution at Christian hands? Therefore there was a *mea culpa* and a "straightening of the path" which was long overdue on the part of the Christians and was indispensable to the work of better mutual understanding. The urgency of such a task was enhanced by the fact that a number of Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, aghast at Hitler's persecutions, could not fail to realize that the stupendous collective murder had been made possible only because Christians, the world over, had been lulled to sleep by a nefarious religious propaganda through centuries of repeated slogans.

The movement for the dialogue itself was set in motion by the well-known historian Professor Jules Isaac. His book *Jesus et Israel* shocked people deeply by uncovering what kind of teaching had been going on in Christian circles regarding the Jews. This is the book, as he tells us himself, which changed Father Baum's vision of the subject and lead him to write *The Jews and the Gospel* [reviewed in The Commonweal Dec. 1].

Professor Isaac pursued his research through several other books. One of them, a condensed introduction to the subject, has been recently published here by the National Conference of Christians and Jews (*Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?*, N.C.C.J., 50c.).

Following historian Isaac's courageous disclosures, a considerable work of revising catechisms as well as commentaries in Bibles and Missals and religious textbooks was taken up in France and carried on under the competent and devoted leadership of Father Démann. The *Amitié Judéo-Chrétienne* was founded for a reappraisal of Christian teaching regarding the Jews. It has endeavored not only to eliminate the damaging approach but also to build a new, fruitful relationship by making available to Christians a better knowledge, not only of their Judaic roots through Jesus and the Old Testament, but also of Judaism itself and its great post-year 70 mystics. Thus the Jewish-Christian dialogue is proceeding in France, as in the United States, along the lines of mutual respect and appreciation indicated by Jerome Taylor.

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

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BOOKS

Technicians in the Art of Killing

The Centurions. By Jean Lartéguy. Translated by Xan Fielding. Dutton. $4.95.

by Bruce A. Cook

IN 1954, when the French Empire in Asia was heaving its last, dying gasps, the United States openly contemplated sending troops and equipment to aid the French in their war with the Vietminh. I was a senior in college at the time, and a little couplet ran around the university—half threat and half prophecy: "It's me and you, at Dien-Bien-Phu."

Only it wasn't. Just last year, President Eisenhower said that he had taken the pulse of the nation at that time and found it a bit weak for such an ambitious undertaking. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of American lives were saved, and more than half of Indo-China was lost to the Communists.

This novel tells of the men who *were* at Dien-Bien-Phu, who endured the brain-washing sessions in the Vietminh prison camps and emerged from the experience harder and wiser. They are the Centurions of the title, French paratroop officers who were charged with the defense of the empire first in Indo-China and later in Algeria. The author, a 39-year-old French journalist, has followed the parachute regiments through three wars (including Korea) as a reporter. He knows them well—or seems to—and what he says about them makes this a fascinating, though a rather frightening book.

Lartéguy begins with the fall of Dien-Bien-Phu and follows a group of officers through their internment by the soldiers of Ho Chi-minh. Far from knuckling under to the Communists' intensive re-education campaign, the officers develop the knack of rolling with the ideological punches dealt out by the commissar. Survival is their goal, and they manage to survive. In doing so, they develop respect for their captors; they learn the methods and devices of Marxism —its form—while rejecting Marxism's matter.

When the peace is signed at Geneva and the officers are repatriated, they reunite to staff a parachute regiment bound for action against the F.L.N. in Algeria. The new regiment is made up partly of volunteer paratroopers and partly of unwilling reservists. Mirandelle, the most politically agile of all the officers, tells one of the recalled reservists: "In Indo-China we experienced the solitude of the mercenaries; we felt like outcasts from the nation. We don't want any more of that situation. We've got to create a popular army, thanks to which we will find ourselves in communion with the people. That's why those who've been called up, the reservists like you, are much more important to us than the volunteers. . . ."

The popular army they whip together for the battles in Algeria is well-skilled in Marxist methods. The paratroopers practice torture and counter-terror, living together, officers and men, and fighting F.L.N. guerrillas with tactics borrowed from Mao Tse-tung.

These Centurions—the aristocratic de Glatigny, the roughneck intellectual, Esclavier, and their Basque commander, Raspeguy—are solely concerned with the creation of a fighting elite. One of the civilian-minded reservists observes: "What are you practising here if it isn't military Communism? But the Communists can at least justify their methods, their pragmatism, their contempt for the individual man by an immense objective: to strip humanity of its old skin; whereas your ultimate aim is simply to win this war, nothing but this war, and, whatever you might say to the contrary, to save the privileged classes and maintain an economic, political and racial inequality. In fact, Captain, you don't really know why you're fighting—from habit, perhaps, and out of barbaric loyalty to the head of your clan who is Raspeguy."

And this, of course, is the flaw in their creation. For their fighting machine, effective as it is, is still only a means and not an end in itself; it is a weapon to be wielded by those with the political power to be able effectively to do so.

Almost inevitably, the book calls to mind much of André Malraux's work. For when one writes a *Zeitroman* like this—with newspaper articles quoted, actual events narrated, etc.—one simply has to write Malraux's kind of book. Jean Lartéguy's novelistic technique is only barely adequate to the job. Although some of his characters seem modeled directly after certain of Malraux's,

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they lack the depth of the revolutionaries and adventurers of *The Conquerors* and *Man's Fate.*

The Centurions seem to lack, too, a moral dimension: They are technicians, plain and simple; technicians in the business of killing men. If they have any ideals, any principles at all, they are of the old-fashioned, *sturm und drang* fascist variety: "It's always a mere handful of men who account for the masses, and nothing great, alas, has ever emerged from peace, neither a nation . . . nor a great work. Peace has always been the reign of mediocrities, and pacifism the bleating of a herd of sheep which allow themselves to be led to the slaughter-house without defending themselves." Shades of Harry Lime!

At the end of the book, the Centurions are on the make for a leader —a *fuehrer.* As they sit in an Algerian hillside bivouac, one exclaims, "Let Rome beware of the danger of the legions." And another prophetically recites a lesson from Roman history: "A large number of the centurions of the Proconsulate of Africa abandoned the legions and came back to Rome. They became the Praetorian Guards of the Caesars until the day they adopted the custom of nominating them and then electing them from among themselves. That was the beginning of the end of Rome . . ."

The Salvation of the Whole World

The Wide World, My Parish. By Yves Congar, O. P. Helicon. $4.50.

by Leonard F. X. Mayhew

IT WOULD be a shame if a deceptively dull title kept readers away from this extremely worthwhile book. Yet the fame of Yves Congar as a theologian and thinker should more than offset it. The questions raised here are important ones which have waited a long time to be discussed in the way Father Congar treats them here.

As the title implies, the question of salvation is world-wide and universal, because it is of concern to every individual human being. In a social context it becomes of more and more universal concern as the nature of personality and freedom and the heightened awareness of non-Christian cultures and societies put forward new questions to be answered about its meaning. Finally, for the Catholic aware of his catholic responsibilities, salvation must always be a universal concern.

Father Congar is an apostle and theologian of the laity, whose aim has habitually been to accord the layman his proper place and function within the dynamic framework of the Church. In this book he turns his attention to several important and vexing questions for which the aware and thinking layman seeks—and deserves—a satisfactory answer.

The questions raised are the traditional ones asked since New Testament times but approached freshly and with an absolute refusal to settle for platitudes in place of difficult answers. This is not theology in the strict sense, nor is it a technically scientific effort to find new understanding. Rather it is an attempt to re-express unchanging truths, to face objections and queries arising from the changed situation of our time and, lastly, to offer honest explanations which will make sense to a modern man. Father Congar's familiarity with the living tradition of the Church, ancient and modern, is the firm foundation of his orthodoxy. His unyielding integrity is the guarantee of honest inquiry.

Of all the problems which lie heavily on the mind of Catholic Christians none causes more anguish or perplexity than the salvation of that great majority of mankind which in one way or another, is outside the reach of the Church. Today's Catholic thinker knows more about the world at large, the "others" whose salvation must be his concern, than did the Fathers and medieval schoolmen. He knows more also about psychology, how emotion and environment influence reason, and the limitations of human freedom. Therefore, he is concerned not only for the salvation of the non-evangelized heathen, but also of those whose

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background apparently makes them impervious to the impact of Christian revelation and its demands. In the face of the new questions this knowledge raises he must reinterpret the formulae of theology. And all the while he must hold faithfully to the Scriptural data presented over the ages by the living voice of tradition.

This is the formidable task which Father Congar sets himself. His discussion of heaven, hell and purgatory, the end of the world, salvation "outside the Church," free will and determinism is frequently authentically challenging and always intelligent. He makes no claim to say the last word. Where he is speculating and uncertain, he makes it clear, and many of his points are open to argument. But he points us in the right direction and he challenges us to be thoughtful and concerned. That is a very great thing.

What Man Has Made He Can Change

Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals. By Paul Goodman. Random House. $5.00.

by Nat Hentoff

PAUL GOODMAN is a radical in the most useful and rarest sense of the word—he insists on probing into the roots of our waste of ourselves. Moreover, he examines us in as total a context as he can construct through his skills as a city planner, psychologist, artist, literary critic, and above all, a relentlessly pragmatic questioner of the brittle but no less constricting dicta of our society.

In all of his work, Goodman starts with the recognition that "our people suffer from a compulsion neurosis; they are warding off panic by repeating themselves; inevitably, they are very busy and very conformist." He is a utopian only in the sense that he is among those who "still think that machines are meant to be useful, that work is a productive activity, that politics aims at the common weal, and in general that something can be done."

What makes these essays—most of which first appeared in magazines—so stimulating is not only the startling commonsense of Goodman's proposals in a wide range of areas but the very process of his thinking. His is a cauterizing habit of mind that illuminates by contrast the arid insularity of so many specialists in the social sciences as well as the debility of the "realistic" political left whose self-alienation has led it to try to manipulate the commonly accepted rules of behavior, political and otherwise, instead of insisting on organic changes in the marrow of the community.

Goodman's recurring focus is, in fact, on the absence of all but superficial community among most of us; and he is convinced that it need not take a political earthquake for us to start working out of our isolations right now. As a modest but characteristic illustration of his method, there is this quite practical suggestion in an essay titled *Utopian Thinking:* "The problem with old ladies in a Home is to keep them from degenerating, so we must provide geriatric 'occupational therapy.' The problem with the orphans in their Home is that, for want of individual attention, they may grow up as cold or 'psychopathic' personalities.' But the old ladies could serve as grandmothers for the orphans, to their mutual advantage. The meaning of community is people using one another as resources."

Elsewhere, he explores the blurring of distinctions between science and technology (the prestige of science itself is too often uncritically affixed to its applications so that there is not enough questioning, for instance, as to what kinds of, and how much, technology should be exported to underdeveloped countries).

There is not enough space to provide a comprehensive indication of the scores of fertile insights Goodman communicates in dealing with such surfacely diverse subjects as writers' block, pacifist films, advance-guard and underground writing, optimum laws on pornography, and the nature of action painting

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(don't frame them; they're not pictures but events). There are also, as an extension of *Growing Up Absurd,* sections on vocational guidance and youth work camps.

Uniting all these explorations is Goodman's insistence that what man has made he can change. Throughout there is a compelling sense of personal identification with the inevitable anguish, however blunted, that comes of woefully insufficient self-fulfillment.

This empathy is particularly and painfully penetrating in his piece "On the Intellectual Inhibition of Explosive Grief and Anger": "We have thus characterized the intellectual sensitive person nowadays as letting his passions dribble away; his grief dribbles away in consoling explanations; his anger dribbles away in impatient approaches. He is always sad and on the verge of anger. He is chronically bored and chronically impatient; unrelenting toward himself; stupid with regard to the others. If he would relent and pity himself, he would bring himself near to tears; and if he would then aim at a condition worthy of a man, he would come to orgiastic sobbing." It is as if Goodman were writing an epilogue to Saul Bellows' *Seize The Day.*

Goodman does expect to find some potential allies as a result of the "new spirit" among more and more undergraduates who are learning that "no society is unchallengeable and unamenable to practical intellect." For a firmly practical manual on how to make this new spirit more durable and constructive, *Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals* should be made required reading in all our academies, perhaps most of all among the faculties. It won't be, but those intellectuals who now find it impossible to stop questioning the rules of the game will get to it anyway.

Goodman's own spirit is so honest and lucid that even if none of the specific ideas in his books are ever adopted in the forms he proposes, he nonetheless will have made a forceful contribution. He has consistently shown in how many non-fantasy ways it is possible to start breaking through our busy discontent. As he says, "our problems are *not* technological and sociological; they are moral and political."

REVIEWERS

Bruce A. Cook is a previous contributor of fiction and critical articles.

Father Leonard F. X. Mayhew, a parish priest serving in Monroe, Georgia, contributes frequent reviews to The Commonweal.

Nat Hentoff, a regular contributor to these pages, has written for the *New Yorker, Harper's,* and other American journals.

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Times, no doubt, have changed since 1927—one doesn't have to read surveys to know that. But it is difficult not to be impressed with the rise in importance of serious periodicals, those which attempt to penetrate behind the news and the events which move and shake the world.

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